R. CRUMB REVEALS HIS ID

What about ID #1, Crumb's latest comic just in from [redacted]? On the cover, a little critter intended to symbolize the id, is standing on the buttocks of a drowned woman saying "Fuck 'em an' cut their heads off! Hyeahn!" Inside, Crumb degrades and debases the image of woman again and again. Well, it's *his* fantasy life as he likes to repeat ad infinitum, but isn't this type of fantasy strange coming from a 47-year-old father? For one thing it's a brutal, sadistic, and completely selfish fantasy. These cartoon women are nothing but big hunks of meat to be used, abused, and tossed aside. There is no pleasure for them in Crumb's fantasies. Is it funny? I don't know. Did you laugh when you read it? I didn't. My honest reaction was to wonder why Crumb has failed to develop. As I read his work over the past two decades, I always thought he would expand, that he would produce a longer work, but this has not happened. In HUP, Crumb has repeated his best shots with improved artwork, but the content reveals that he has not expanded his range of interests. I think this is sad. I know *why* it is, at least partially; within the comics community, which is as insular as any other special interest group, Crumb has always been praised as an innovator, as the man in the avant garde, the guy who opened comics up again after the Code—and this is all true—but what Crumb has never gotten from his tight circle of groupies is any honest criticism, particularly of his content. His fear of that criticism is evident in the many interviews he has drawn in which he depicts himself as a star being interviewed by someone he considers an inferior media clone. By interviewing himself, Crumb has avoided submitting to the kind of questions he would get from someone who had read his work and reflected upon it. Cast as a star, Crumb was denied the opportunity to grow. Anyone can see this by reading through the first five volumes of THE COMPLETE CRUMB. Crumb was exposed to a generation of young people through his own self-published comic books which were serialized in the underground newspapers of the early seventies. He said and drew what he wanted to. There was never a time in the history of comics when an individual had such freedom. Crumb automatically became a leader and his own views of that experience have been published often enough that they need not be reiterated here. Leaders, unfortunately, are hero-worshipped, never questioned. Whatever they say is "great" or "groovy." Crumb was not edited. Every underground publisher wanted one of his comic books. Underground newspaper editors routinely swiped his social stuff, stories like WHITEMAN, not his graphic personal psychoses. To the *acid heads* or *flower children*, Crumb was the ultimate satirist, the guy who tore the mask off the bourgeoisie and exposed the inherent hypocrisy of the American Establishment, and he was funny. That was the important thing. He made the Establishment look ridiculous and the kids loved him for it. He made fun of Women's Liberation and the adolescent boys cum campus politicos loved him for that. He even made fun of Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n Roll! But stardom ultimately brought him down just as it did dylan and Mick Jagger and a host of other pop revolutionaries who now spend their private lives hiding in million dollar beach houses and British country houses. You live inside a closed circle, you don't develop a view of what exists outside that circle.

Well, here we are twenty years later and the kids are at least 34 and life is very different than it was when Haight was in flower. Many have teenagers of their own and are worrying about what effect listening to 2 Live Crew will have on their development. It might surprise you, but many of these people never even knew Crumb's name and couldn't tell you who drew the Freak Brothers any more than they know who is currently inking LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE. Outsiders to the comics community read the funnies in their morning papers and chuckle and hit the commuter traffic. Crumb never entered that world at all. The only person to make the transition from underground comix to regular strips is Bill Griffith whose Zippy is now syndicated through King Features. Crumb never *sold out*. He kept on drawing what he pleased in his own titles and in WEIRDO through the eighties until he decided to leave this country and live in Paris in mid-1990. By his own admission, he was never comfortable with the stardom conferred upon him during the Acid era. He enjoyed some of the perks, but hated having people after him all the time.

But is ID the way Crumb wants to be remembered? I can see that this is mainly some sketchbook stuff and a few random drawings like the one of Terry Boyce reprinted here, but I had a negative reaction to ID. It's a hate-filled vengeful book with drawings of a lot of women Crumb was ignored by in his high school years and nothing good happens to any of the women; they are just objects for Crumb's anger. I don't know who he is talking to in ID. Himself? Perhaps we will hear something new from him in a few years after he is settled in France. We have to remember that Crumb, like many other creative people who were lumped collectively with various sixties causes, has been reacting to that Establishment rejection. It will be nice to see what he does with his talent in a country that gives artists an honored place in society.

C.G.

TERRY BOYCE
(BEFORE SHE BECAME A CHRISTIAN)

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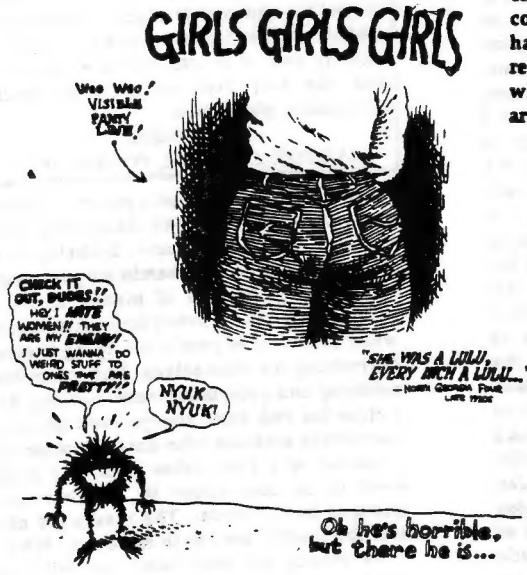
GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS
Woo Woo! VISIBLE PANTY LINE!
"SHE WAS A LULU, EVERY INCH A LULU..."
CHUCK IT OUT, DUDES!! HEY, I ATE WOMEN!! THEY ARE MY ENEMY!! I JUST WANNA DO WEIRD STUFF TO ONES THAT ARE PRETTY!!
NYUK NYUK!
Oh he's horrible, but there he is...

ID NO. 1, ©1990 by R. CRUMB. COMPLETED MAY 1990. PUBLISHED BY FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 1563 LANE CITY WAY, N. E., SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, 98115. ALL MATERIAL IN THIS BOOK WAS TAKEN FROM R. CRUMB'S PERSONAL SKETCHBOOKS.

This August Diana Russell and Niki Craft invaded a grocery store and an adult bookstore in Bellingham, Washington, where they tore up some copies of HUSTLER and PLAYBOY. They were arrested for malicious mischief. Said Russell, who lives here in Berkeley and teaches at Mills College: *The evidence for associating pornography with violence against women is stronger than the evidence relating smoking and lung cancer. We are seeing the mainstream media becoming more and more abusive, eroticizing violence against women and using it to entertain, not educate.* Russell's new book is MAKING VIOLENCE SEXY: THE POLITICS OF PORNOGRAPHY. Ah, there's a good living to be made in porn whether you're pro or con. These anti-porn warriors are probably already booked on DONAHUE's fall schedule. And isn't it a bit like beating a dead horse to attack PLAYBOY? For the last few years, it's been a tiresome tome full of the same slick ads that appear in all of the other mags of it's format. PLAYBOY stock has dropped to about four bucks a share. It's a boring pub, an idea whose time has long gone. As for men who are violent with women, most of the studies I have read show that they are sociopaths who hate their mothers. Reading or viewing certain kinds of pornography may modify their methods, but the rage against women is present in childhood long before exposure to any kind of pornography.

DARKROT

The opening scene of DARKMAN is in progress in Plex #6 of the Hilltop Mall near Pinole, California. It's a few minutes after one in the afternoon. August 30, 1990. Onscreen a white bad guy is using his cigar clipper to chop the fingers off a black bad guy one by one. In the row in front of me, the mother of a four year old girl is telling her baby she will be put in jail if she doesn't keep quiet. Two rows up an obvious grandfather sits next to his eight-year-old grandson. DARKMAN has an R rating [for Rotten?] and is not just a violent film; this is close to two hours of sadistic torture and brutality. The lead, a genetic engineer, is beaten, maimed, tortured, and has most of his face burned off, all at a leisurely pace so that the audience can enjoy the gore. DARKMAN is one long, relentless scream. At one point the mother in front of me took the little girl out of the theater and I thought it had finally gotten through to this stupid clod that this not only wasn't a movie for little children, but that it wasn't made for civilized people at all. But I was being naive. They were back in a moment with another big tub of popcorn and the little girl had to cringe there until the last blood-soaked minute of this latex loser. I hated DARKMAN almost as much as ROBOCRAP II. Why? Because the filmmakers are no longer fulfilling their function, which is escapist fantasy; instead they are attacking the audience and cheating them. Like the rest of you, I suffer from many of the frustrations of living in an over-crowded urban environment and I enjoy going to see thrillers to get a little bit of symbolic revenge against the autocratic powers that control my life. When I am subjected to what I see as deliberate psychopathy onscreen and it is directed at me, my fantasy is violated, not fulfilled. I do not have fantasies about cutting off people's hands and fingers or ripping their hearts out and I don't think there are many people outside of the state hospitals who do have such fantasies. So what is the rationale for DARKMAN?

What we are seeing these days is the complete loss of a hero with whom we can identify. I certainly can't identify with Robocop or Darkman. I can see a little of myself in that supercop in DIE HARD 2, but not much. The stunt men have gone so far with their expertise that the characters have been lost. To identify, I have to feel that I might possibly do what the hero is doing and today's films simply exclude flesh and blood people. The scientist in DARKMAN would have been dead, period. This is a supernatural film without such an explanation. The original PHANTOM OF THE OPERA was plausible. He was simply burned with acid and could have survived.

What the change represents is the loss of what was a major safety valve for the frustrated mass of people who work on the lower levels in contemporary society. The guy who goes to the mall to get off on a revenge fantasy has to be able to identify with the avenger and when he cannot do that he has been cheated at the box office. Instead of walking out onto the asphalt with the feeling of having gotten back at his oppressors, he walks outside feeling more overwhelmed and beaten than he did when he walked inside. DEATH WISH works for this guy; DARKMAN doesn't. The average urban worker can identify with Paul who turns vigilante and kills the urban scumbags who prey on us all and make it unsafe for us to walk the streets and enjoy the parks. ROBOCOP and DARKMAN force the average viewer to remain a spectator and in so doing operate in a manner which I find psychologically negative. C.G.

The qualities that attracted me to Jane Fonda were not those everyone recognizes in her today--political courage, leadership, commitment to feminist causes, incredible success in films and business, or the image of an intellectual who sacrifices neither her home for her ideas nor her ideas for her home. It was the vulnerability hiding behind the appearance of strength and self-confidence, her honest search for her true identity and, of course, her face, her body and the fact that we were perfectly compatible physically.

Roger Vadim,
BARDOT, DENEUVE, FONDA, 1986.

Berkeley has been called a gourmet ghetto by some wit in a local ad throwaway. The writer is wrong, of course. Berkeley is a ghetto of sorts, but few herein are gourmets. It takes a great deal of money to be a gourmet and we are living through a period when a handful of people are trying to take everything for themselves. This includes anything and everything worth owning. As a class the rich have always been greedy, insensitive assholes who used the mass of mankind as a slave labor pool, but they used to be cool about it. All that has changed in the 1990s. The masks are off and the fascists are out in the open. What little money the poor have left will be taken from them and they will be lucky to be allowed to hang around in the streets and beg like the untouchables of India.

CLASS INSTRUCTION

The point of a private school in the U.S.A. is to represent in its curriculum the purest conspicuous waste. Unlike the English public schools, our private schools do not aim to prepare a ruling class to govern--the exception used to be Groton. Our usual private schools are not vocational schools even in that remote sense. If there is anything *exclusive* (aside from the cost) in the whole system of private education, it is the *exemption* of a class of students from evident vocational goals.

Mary McCarthy
HOW I GREW

Is it possible to tell a joke in a town where the majority of the population feel the compulsion to be socially and politically correct every second of their lives? I came up with this routine about a comedian who walked out onstage in a Berkeley club and started to do his routine, but each time he began a gag he would notice someone in the audience who might be offended by it so he suppressed it and wound up walking offstage without saying anything at all. Can't tell a joke about women without being called a sexist, about black or Chinese people without being called a racist, about old people without being called an agist, about gays without being called a homophobe, about animals without getting booed by the Vegans and the Animal Rights Activists. Humor, of course, has always been sadistic and offensive while functioning as an escape valve at the same time. It is the rare person who has grown up as politically pure as many Berkeley folk would like to think they are. The ultimate joke would offend everyone.

What used to be called race humor has disappeared in Berkeley. It is all right to make fun of white people, white men in particular, but it is politically incorrect to make fun of black or Asian men. Think of it. Eddie Murphy can do a routine where he makes fun of the way white people dance and that's funny, but if a white comic makes fun of the way black people dance, that's racist. Now this doesn't mean people have changed. What it means is that black and Asian people are dehumanized by being excluded from the realm of public humor. When Bob Clampett's black cartoons were taken out of circulation by the guardians of the public psyche, they were not replaced with humorous cartoons which more accurately depicted blacks and their lifestyle. The blacks simply vanished from the world of cartoons until Cosby's FAT ALBERT came along some thirty years later. LI'L EIGHT BALL was dropped from NEW FUNNIES. He was not replaced with a more appropriate black character.

If you look at COAL BLACK AND DE SEBBEN DWARFS or TIN PAN ALLEY CATS today, you would be right in saying that these cartoons made fun of black people, but if you look at other cartoons from the same period you would find that they made just as much fun of white people and it would be more correct to say that the animators delighted in making fun of the popular stereotypes of all kinds of people. Black people weren't singled out for an attack by these cartoonists; they were included as part of mankind. To me, exclusion was and is the ultimate injustice. I can handle Richard Pryor or Eddie Murphy making fun of me and I think they could handle my making fun of them. C.G.